

## THE MEANINGS OF NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION IN INTERVIEWS FOR SELECTION OF PROFESSIONAL NURSING

### SIGNIFICADOS DA COMUNICAÇÃO NÃO VERBAL PARA AS ENTREVISTADORAS NA SELEÇÃO DE PROFISSIONAIS DE ENFERMAGEM

### SIGNIFICADO DE LA COMUNICACIÓN NO VERBAL PARA LAS ENTREVISTADORAS EN LA SELECCIÓN DE PROFESIONALES DE ENFERMERÍA

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#### ABSTRACT

This study aims to better understand how nurses in management positions at a university hospital interpret the nonverbal signals of candidates being interviewed for employment as nurses. It is a descriptive research with a qualitative approach, which used semi-structured interviews collected from twelve nurses in management positions and six nurses in continuing education at a university hospital in São Paulo. Data were analyzed using Minayo's content analysis. Results indicated the most noticed nonverbal signals to be: The importance of presentation and personal care; eye contact; the tone of voice and manner of speaking. These data were interpreted as indicators of self-confidence, emotional balance and sincerity. It was concluded that the nurses' knowledge of nonverbal cues was insufficient. They noticed personal appearance, eye contact, tone of voice and posture, and attributed poor personal presentation and alteration in the tone of voice to signs of disinterest and insecurity or emotional leakage. Posture and gesticulation were taken as nervousness. The results reveal that nurses in this study have difficulty deciphering non-verbal communication and feel the need to develop the perception that power of communication to better performance in the selection of candidates.

**Keywords:** Interview; Nonverbal Communication; Interpersonal Relations; Personnel Selection.

#### RESUMO

*Este estudo teve por objetivo conhecer como as enfermeiras gerentes de um hospital universitário interpretam os sinais não verbais dos candidatos nas entrevistas de seleção para contratar colaboradores para trabalhar no serviço sob suas gerências. É uma pesquisa descritiva na abordagem qualitativa, cuja técnica de coleta foi a entrevista semiestruturada com 12 enfermeiras ocupantes do cargo de gerente e seis enfermeiras de Educação Permanente num hospital universitário na cidade de São Paulo. Os dados coletados sob a forma de respostas foram submetidos à análise de conteúdo em conformidade com a teoria de Minayo. Os resultados evidenciaram os sinais não verbais mais percebidos: a importância da apresentação e do cuidado pessoal; o olhar; o tom de voz e o modo de falar. Esses aspectos foram interpretados como indicadores de segurança, equilíbrio emocional e de sinceridade. Concluiu-se que o conhecimento das enfermeiras sobre as pistas não verbais é insuficiente. Elas percebiam a aparência pessoal, a forma de olhar, de falar e a postura do candidato. Atribuíram significado de desinteresse à apresentação pessoal inadequada e de insegurança ou mentira no modo de olhar (fuga) e nas alterações no tom de voz. Já a postura ao sentar-se e a gesticulação foram tidas como nervosismo ou hábito. Os resultados revelam que as enfermeiras deste estudo não possuem experiências e/ou habilidades em decifrar a comunicação não verbal e sentem necessidade de desenvolvimento da percepção dessa competência de comunicação para melhor desempenho na seleção de candidatos.*

**Palavras-chave:** Entrevista; Comunicação não Verbal; Relações Interpessoais; Seleção de Pessoal.

#### RESUMEN

*El objetivo de este estudio ha sido conocer cómo las enfermeras gerentes de un hospital universitario interpretaban las señales no verbales de los candidatos en las entrevistas de trabajo para contratación de empleados para servicios bajo su gestión. Se trata de una investigación descriptiva con enfoque cualitativo. La recogida de datos se realizó por medio de entrevistas semiestructuradas a doce enfermeras con cargo de gerente y seis enfermeras de educación continua de un hospital universitario de la ciudad de San Pablo. El análisis de contenido de los datos recogidos en las respuestas se llevó a cabo en base a la teoría de Minayo. Los resultados han puesto en evidencia las señales no verbales más percibidas: la importancia de la apariencia y de la prolijidad, la mirada, el tono de voz y la manera de hablar. Estos datos fueron interpretados como indicadores de seguridad, equilibrio emocional y sinceridad. Se ha llegado a la conclusión que las enfermeras no tenían conocimiento suficiente sobre las señales no verbales. Se daban cuenta de la apariencia personal, del modo de hablar y de mirar y de la postura del candidato. Para ellas la presentación personal inadecuada significaba desinterés y*

*la mirada esquiva y las alteraciones en el tono de voz transmitían inseguridad o mentira. La postura al sentarse y las gesticulaciones eran tomadas como nerviosismo o como un hábito. Los resultados han mostrado que las enfermeras de este estudio no tenían la experiencia y/o la habilidad para descifrar la comunicación no verbal y que sentían la necesidad de desarrollar dicha percepción para mejorar su desempeño en la selección de candidatos.*

**Palabras clave:** Entrevista; Comunicación no Verbal; Relaciones Interpersonales; Selección de Personal.

## INTRODUCTION

Communication is one of the most important skills human beings have. It permeates human relationships and may facilitate or create barriers. According to Silva<sup>1</sup>, communication is an interactional process in which people exchange and discuss ideas, talk and dialogue. This process influences individuals and their environment, their perceptions, needs and values. Birdwhistell<sup>2</sup> and Corraze<sup>3</sup> ascribe more importance to verbal communication, but nonverbal communication taking place face to face expresses an informational content that can be even more reliable than words themselves, for this content can confirm, complement or contradict the verbal. Thus, both verbal and non-verbal languages are considered important for understanding the relationships between people.

The initial contact between two people causes in each an impression that can be positive for both parties, facilitating intimacy. If the opposite occurs, even if only in part, a future relationship may be impaired. The author comments that a first erroneous impression may cause unnecessary hassle, and notes that first impressions can be influenced by prejudices, expectations, and motivations at the time and the type of situation.<sup>4</sup>

Knapp and Hall<sup>5</sup> built a model systematizing into categories the cues or non-verbal behavior signals that occur during a conversation between two or more people: the environment in which the non-verbal communication takes place, the organization and decoration of the place being significant; the physical appearance and clothing of the people; proxemics, the study of the distance between people, determined by the different situations and degree of intimacy; kinesics, which covers the gestural behavior, posture, facial expression and eye contact; haptics, touching as a form of communication; and paralanguage, meaning all voice signals accompanying speech.

In interviews for selection, a relationship between interviewer and interviewee is established. This is a time when clarifications by both parties can be made. This strategy is a tool that benefits the interaction, if used appropriately. The interviewer should avoid making judgments based on first impressions.<sup>6,7</sup>

The main criticism of the excessive valuing of first impressions is that interviewers may disqualify a good candidate because of them. Some authors report that there is a tendency of the interviewers to sympathize with the most attractive candidates and those matching a predetermined profile, disregarding the qualities and experience of others. In such a case, they

fail to choose a candidate whose attributes were unexplored, and passed over due to subjective criteria.<sup>5</sup>

Selecting the most suitable candidate for a given job requires great communication skills on the part of the interviewer, as well as recognition of behavioral attitudes that can influence the evaluation. Usually, in companies, applicants for a position undergo an interview with the manager of the area, accompanied by a psychologist.<sup>8</sup>

Will the manager be able to interact with the interviewee, to recognize and value the non-verbal signs of communication? When hiring, the interview appears to be paramount in the decision-making process of selecting a candidate. In practice, however, it is common to see candidates disqualified during an interview, full of disappointment and confusion. It is these subjective issues that could affect the outcome of an interview that encouraged us to conduct a survey of nursing managers and continuing education managers that perform admission interviews. This study aims to investigate the interviewers' perspective of the non-verbal communication of candidates, and the degree of importance that they give non-verbal cues during an interview, and whether the interviewers perceive themselves competent to decipher non-verbal communication in a job interview.

## METHODOLOGY

This is an exploratory qualitative conducted in a university hospital in São Paulo, University Hospital of the Federal University of São Paulo (UNIFESP).<sup>9</sup> Twelve nurse managers of the divisions of the hospital's Nursing Board and six nurses linked to continuing education were invited. Data collection was conducted from October to December 2012 by the researcher herself, through individual interviews with four guiding questions: "Do you usually observe nonverbal communication in employee admission interviews?"; "How close do you keep yourself from the candidate?"; "What are the clues or signs that are important to you and why?"; "Do you trust your ability to decipher these signs?"

The interviews were recorded and transcribed by the researcher. Data analysis followed Minayo's thematic axis content analysis model.<sup>10</sup> Transcripts were revised and validated by two nursing PhD candidates of the research group (GEPAG). Content was interpreted, analyzed and discussed based on Knapp and Hall's thematic reference of nonverbal communication.<sup>5</sup>

The study was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of UNIFESP-EPM / Plataforma Brazil, Hospital São Paulo, under Report 81.554, after approval by the hospital's Nursing Director.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the transcripts were grouped into five themes: importance of presentation and personal care; importance of the more apparent non-verbal cues; influence of the candidate's behavior in the decision-making; relationship between interviewer and interviewee; and intuition and experience as a strategy.

### CATEGORY 1 – THE IMPORTANCE OF PRESENTATION AND PERSONAL CARE

Personal presentation and appearance was considered important. Participants report as common candidates wearing transparent or excessively short clothing, or with too many clothing accessories. Some candidates with poor presentation dress sloppily and even show a lack of personal hygiene:

14.s6 *"Ideally, their appearance should be consistent with what is acceptable by the public."*

18.s9.1 *"[...] Excesses draws more attention, I think, things that are in addition to what would be normal [...]"*

13.s3 *"[...] exaggeration bothers me, [like when] someone comes with long nails, or having piercings [...]"*

114.s14 *"Some candidates are very careless with their appearance and health [...] I think this could be harmful at work."*

From these comments, we can see that the interviewed nurses are strict about clothing and the physical appearance of future employees, in part because they have learned as undergraduates the dress code of hospitals, a workplace that follows specific guidelines by the Ministry Labour, NR 32.<sup>11</sup>

113.s11 *"[...] In college I learned to dress more discreetly clothes, [...] It shows more of one's personality."*

*"[...] The best way to avoid a delicate situation when it comes to private environments, companies or educational institutions, is [to follow] the dress code. Sometimes this code is written, sometimes it's not ... One can see how the other employees dress and behave and try to adapt to them."<sup>12</sup>*

The nurses interviewed point that clothing is the first cue as to the candidate's behavior. Extravagant or sloppy clothing are seen as negative and can directly influence their decision, since the interviewer expects the candidate to be neat and consistent with the work environment.

The body can give clues about a candidate's expectations and behavior, directly interfering with the interviewer's first impressions. Proper appearance and dress favors a positive view and reveal the candidate's identity and body image. A positive body image gives people a good impression. Studies show that a person who takes care of their appearance has an advantage in getting better jobs. Features such as beauty and fitness can lead to positive reactions, and this also includes clothing, accessories, and proper use of perfume.<sup>5</sup>

### CATEGORY 2 – THE IMPORTANCE OF MORE APPARENT NONVERBAL CUES

Facial expression, eye contact, voice and diction, and posture were considered by interviewers as the more easily detected behavioral cues. The participants explained that they feel that the eyes are the first to sketch a reaction, and that in certain ways they seem to regulate the interaction. We agree that the eyes are indeed windows to the soul and interaction with others begins between sets of eyes.<sup>13</sup> Neurolinguistic studies describe eye contact as a source of communication and intelligence, and it is strongly evident in intimate relations.

Some nurses interviewed, however, cannot decipher the eyes, and feel uncomfortable when they are not seen:

19.s8 *"The eye-to-eye moment is very strong, and dialogue needs this contact. Some facial expressions before a question, or even an eyebrow raised [...] [Those seem to indicate] an untruth, maybe a lie."*

12.s19 *"[...] A certain enthusiasm [can be very apparent] if they have that twinkle in their eye [...]"*

14.s26 *"The eyes show fundamental objective information that the person is not brave enough to say [...]"*

13.s15.3 *"[...] she did not look at me, that bothered me."*

18.s14 *"Someone who does not look you in the eye, who is talking and looking away, [that] for me is a negative [thing]."*

Pupils dilate in response to light. This reflex is controlled by the brain, unconsciously. When a person feels angry or nervous, the pupils can contract, but when a person feels excited,

happy, or surprise, their pupils dilate. Several authors have studied the pupillary response in relation to the verbal response and the significance of that eye contact gives indications as to a person's emotional state.<sup>13,14,15</sup>

[...] "There is also a greater number of winks, pupil dilation and self-touching".<sup>13,15</sup>

The more experienced nurses, when interviewing, were able to decipher a certain way of looking as an indication of submissiveness or confrontation. The majority, however, reported doubt as to the real meaning of certain eye movements.

Ekman<sup>13</sup> emphasizes human relationships (social-emotional), whose facial expressions, in addition to verbal communication, make it easier for people to properly read another's face, taking in cues that indicate consistency between what is said and what is expressed only by eye contact. This facilitates interaction between beings that communicate using their tone of voice. The interviewers reported ease at deciphering non-verbal cues by the tone and the manner of speaking.

Study participants realized that, during the interview, after a few questions about the candidate's behavior in certain professional situations, some would alter their tone of voice. They found that some candidates spoke too much or too quickly, or interrupted the interviewer as if to confuse her. For interviewers, the way a person speaks is essential in the interview process, as it indicates how they will talk to their patients and how they will interact with the team. Instances of stuttering, trembling voice, aggressive speech or sudden change of subject, and long silences were interpreted by as signs of insecurity, emotional imbalance or lack of interest in the job.

The author's own studies refer to an important piece of paraverbal language, the different ways people talk to each other: how people show affection, and will emphasize that emotion through a sentence, which can be interpreted in many ways. Often a simple phrase, such as "hi", can establish an effective interaction. On the other hand, speaking in a hurry, interrupting each other, and making the interlocutor experience unavailability, can compromise bonding and create obstacles for interaction.<sup>1,16</sup>

The interviewers' statements show that they clearly perceived the meaning of this paralanguage, and paid attention to how the candidates spoke. Some mentioned candidates who talked too much, interrupting the interviewer, and the changes of tone, going from friendly to domineering, and they mentioned also candidates who were in so much distress they could hardly answer.

14.s20 "[...] some people have a domineering tone of voice, as we discover during the interview."

15.s71 "If you need to stop them from speaking, or if they do not speak grammatically, that for me is a candidate I would not approve."

19.s16.2 "[...] [this candidate] stammered, his voice was shaky, giving the impression of a possibly unbalanced person, but was it really the case?"

The literature on the relationship of the voice signals with changes in attitude shows that the following voice signals can give more credibility to the speaker and reveal behavioral shifts: speaking without hesitation; latency in minor responses; being articulate and attentive; speaking faster and louder.<sup>17,18</sup>

The participants were able to relate the body posture to the anxiety of candidates during the interview. For some authors, the many forms of expression related to body posture imply a closer link between speech and body movement; facial expressions, coordinated with leg movement, can be meaningful and predict a certain behavior.<sup>19</sup>

Another study shows that gestures, facial expressions and posture concerns mostly people holding political or executive positions, as they try to develop non-verbal communication in all its dimensions in order to be more convincing and effective in their communication.<sup>20</sup> Other studies note, however, that in addition to posture and body movement, other cues are needed to complete the whole process of non-verbal communication; the environment must be also be considered, as well as the way people speak, how they gesticulate, the intensity of their touch, the space they occupy and how these elements relate to each other.<sup>2,3</sup>

12.s1 "[...] I observed this candidate's behavior because of his changing profile, he was an auxiliary and became a nurse, and this gives him a lot of anxiety. He wants the job, and I understand [that's why he's nervous] [...]".

13.s5.2 "[...] During some of the questions I see them touching their faces, kicking their feet, as if they're not relaxed."

112.s28 "[...] When candidates come to an interview and do not sit upright in the chair, it's hard to respect them or feel much confidence about them."

Posture can build a positive image of the person, favoring a nonverbal communication that is efficient, clear, and coherent, but speech, gestures and posture should be in sync with each other.<sup>5</sup>

Regarding the physical distance between the candidate and the interviewer, those who greeted her with a cheek kiss

were considered inconvenient, unless they were people of the interviewer's circle of friends.

Interpersonal distance is strongly linked to one's personal space and reveals degrees of intimacy. When this closeness is forced by one party, the violation of personal space can be seen as negative, indicating invasion of privacy, and creating tension and difficulty in interaction.

According to Hall,<sup>21</sup> social distance is considered normal in formal relations. Handshakes are common and a moment of closeness and have a certain degree of intimacy.

12.s7.1 *"Some will want to shake hands, and others are freer; I wouldn't say I'm particularly formal, it's up to each interviewer to decide how close they allow the candidates to get"*

14.s10.3 *"[...] I am close to the candidate, facing them, and try to maintain their privacy and keep the door closed."*

15.s12 *"Kissing are usually not done—in my opinion this is not the time or the place, I find that a little too permissive."*

Touching is considered in the literature as a channel that allows proximity, and it is used in interactions establishing bonds of trust, providing support, satisfaction, and solace.<sup>22,23</sup>

Greetings may differ between the various types of behavior, from a simple handshake to a hug or even cheek kissing, but it will depend on how the whole interaction is conducted, on the environment, and on the non-verbal behavior of the interviewers. The following statements illustrate how interviewers perceived touching.

13.s11 *"[...] These are people who don't know you, so there isn't much touching."*

14.s12 *"[...] There has to be some hierarchical respect. Because I have Asian ascendancy, I believe in that."*

19.s11.2 *"I don't think it's appropriate in an interview when a candidate greets you and touches you without permission, that is rather intimate."*

112.s16 *"[...] There's always a more shy and withdrawn one, but there are also extremely invasive people who will hug and kiss you sight unseen."*

Touching was then perceived as formal and appropriate in the form of handshakes, but something invasive in the form of cheek kissing.

### CATEGORY 3 – INFLUENCE OF THE CANDIDATE'S BEHAVIOR IN THE DECISION-MAKING

People learn from their families, their life experiences, and have their personal values and beliefs, but their professional training is done at school, where their technical skills are developed, and little attention is paid there to interpersonal aspects.

Candidates can feel unprepared when looking for their first job, with increasingly fierce competition in the market. Facing the employer, candidates may end up manifesting signs of anxiety and exaggerated interest in the position, making their assessment difficult. These cues are clear in the following statements:

14.s4 *"There is the initial anxiety, they're recent graduates with no experience, so there's already this anxiety, this nervousness [...]"*

E12.f2 *"[...] the candidate's transparency is something that I really value, so clarity, firmness, and humility in dealing with their difficulties, always trying to improve."*

E16.f58 *"What matters in my assessment is that the candidate shows commitment, availability, even if they don't have experience. [It's fine] if they have the will and want to be part of the institution."*

Lack of experience and knowledge is relevant in professional practice. Such a candidate knows that it could take long to get hired for the first time, as the market prefers hiring better prepared professionals. In our study, conducted at a university hospital, experience was not needed. Therefore, behavioral cues are more important in hiring applicants.

For Silva<sup>1</sup>, untruths are soon perceived in facial expressions, in the form of contradictions between what is said with what is being shown. Our behavior can also influence another's behavior, and the main reactions during early interactions are connected to nervousness and anxiety. Overall, stuttering, tremors, kicking feet, if persistent during the interaction, may indicate an altered emotional state, lying, and incoherence.

The interviewers' reports were in agreement as to the candidate's cues, but the interviewers were doubtful as to whether they would hire them or not, as the statements show:

16.s10.1 *"If the candidate is taking too long to respond, if they are suddenly searching for words, that's a sign of insecurity for me. I don't know if I trust that, and I'll probably opt for another candidate."*

18.s18 *"[...] If the candidate is talking and making exaggerated facial expressions (I find that inappropriate),"*

*give evasive answers, is searching for words, that's all very relevant to make me opt for another candidate."*

19.s2.3 "[...] I can tell if the candidate is in doubt if they speak too fast or try to stall."

115.s23 "[...] "Sometimes a candidate will overstate things, and makes a facial expression that denotes uncertainty, and that may make me opt for another applicant."

117.s12 "I think it's relevant when a candidate responds to a question in a certain way, but their body act in another. That makes me uneasy, and I can tell that's a lie."

For the study participants, non-verbal signals are the key factors to deduce the candidate's communicative behavior. The interviewer must have a sharp eye, and consider the candidate in all their dimensions, which may reveal a behavior that can often be manipulative and even influence the people involved in hiring process.<sup>19</sup>

The literature shows that lies are first noticed through the candidate's hand and arm gestures, and then through their facial expressions. Recent studies, however, describe the face as the great betrayer of hidden thoughts and feelings.<sup>5,13</sup>

#### CATEGORY 4 – RELATION BETWEEN INTERVIEWER AND CANDIDATE

The interview is seen as formal relationship, as interviewer and interviewee establish the first contact. On the one hand, the interviewee tries to understand and meet the expectations of the interviewer; on the other, the interviewer, an adept professional is interested in getting to know the candidate in all their dimensions. It will require a good relationship to establish trust and credibility, enabling the exchange of information the possibility of choosing the best applicant.

In the statements below, the study participants show how they sought to create a congenial environment during the interview, but at the same time avoiding intimacy:

16.s6 "[...] I said:" Look, relax, calm down, this is just a chat, we just want to get to know you, just as you need to get to know me "

112.s19.1 "[...] [I try to] create a relaxed environment and offer him feel extremely comfortable [...]."

117.f5 "[...] I avoid getting close and showing much interest until the candidate's behavior is more apparent. "

The interviewers mention a certain engagement with the candidate. The interview is short, and during that period, the interviewers need to precisely analyze all the cues, try to make candidates comfortable, and still keep it formal. Friendship is not allowed, according to their statements, because an interview is a situation in which the interviewer must assume a serious role to make a precise and impartial judgment when choosing a candidate.

#### CATEGORY 5 – INTUITION AND EXPERIENCE AS STRATEGY

The study participants indicate that interaction begins with the greeting, structures the dialogue, mediates the degree of approximation, and concludes with parting. After that the other interviewers judge the candidate. Reactions and attitudes are perceived, but it is necessary to accurately decode the signs in movement, posture, vocal and facial expressions. The participants all sought to find meaning in these signals.

If the candidate gives non-verbal signs of dissatisfaction or sometimes evades a question, these can lead to a negative judgment of behavior. A sudden change of subject, more direct questions, interruptions, and looking away all indicate that there is a chance they will not be accepted.

Nurses with more experience with interviews realize they have developed a certain skill in understanding the non-verbal signs over the years, the result of shared experiences and intuition that has much to do with a sharp eye and associations. Most of the participants did not have that clarity, which suggests special attention is needed for professionals in positions of judgment. More than anything, they say, we must analyze our own non-verbal behavior, as it directly affects the candidate's reaction. Do we send signals during the interaction that can harm their performance during the interview?

12.s11 "[...] sometimes I do it by intuition, because when you do something for a long time, you believe you can assess a candidate well. It's like God. I'm deciding this person's life."

13.s13 "[...] I'm still learning about this, about accurately identifying these signs."

14.s13 "[...] It is a subjective perception. I haven't done this too much, but with time, let's say, speech begins to sound the same, follow the same pattern [...]."

19.s15 "[...] I think I have some experience [...] I never believe 100% [of what a candidate says]."

111.s16 "[...] It's my work experience that gives me this 'feeling', [this intuition], but you can still go wrong."

E12.f21 "[...] I have been doing interviews with one of my subordinate nurses so I'll have that second opinion. Sometimes what makes an impression on me it doesn't for her. I think over time, my perception has improved a lot."

The participants agree that throughout their life experiences, on both social and professional levels, there is a clear interest in developing the skills of perception and decoding of non-verbal communication. They believe it is a competence in interpersonal relationship that can be improved through workshops with case studies. However, there is the possibility of making mistakes, because of the short period of interaction.

I14.s44 "[...] I believe that the process could be made a lot easier, if we underwent training, and check our assessments to get a better idea of how the candidate really is."

I16.s10 "[...] The interview is too short to assess the information given by the candidate with precision."

According to these considerations, we do not have the ability to consciously codify and decode non-verbal cues, and we can easily overlook the meaning a simple touch of greeting can transmit. From the statements, we saw that the more experienced nurses usually trust their judgment to decode the cues.

The ability to catch non-verbal cues is related to a social competence, namely social intelligence. People with high social intelligence skills are better at deciphering non-verbal cues, are more attentive to each other, and are focused on sending and receiving messages. This is a skill that can be developed through training, but most people simply develop this ability throughout life. There are signals do be decoded since birth, in the facial expressions of the mother and/or caregiver, specialists say.<sup>24</sup>

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Body image, reflected in the physical appearance of candidates, was the most valued cue, because it is the most obvious and there are dress codes in hospitals and nursing schools. Non-verbal cues, such as the eye contact and manner of speaking, were deemed as indicative of insecurity or lying on the part of the candidates, even though not all participants were sure of the cues' meanings. Body posture during the interview, such as not sitting upright, and excessive gesticulation were also interpreted as insecurity and lying. Some nurses, however, did not attribute any meaning to gesticulation, claiming that youth and nervousness were factors.

The nurses also said that a single short interview is insufficient, most of the time, to subsidy a decision for or against an applicant.

Some of the participants' lack of experience in reading more subjective non-verbal cues may also be a hindering factor. There was the question whether they could be verbally influencing the candidates. They recognized that they had only superficial knowledge about non-verbal communication, as a support for spoken communication, and that physical appearance stood out.

This study is relevant to nursing, because more awareness about communication can have implications in the day to day activities of the profession, in the better understanding and sharing of messages, by listening and perceiving before planning actions. There is also the awareness of how communication influences the behavior of all people involved in any given process, be they patients or the multidisciplinary hospital team. Nursing is an area where professionals are increasingly under-prepared, and it is necessary to develop verbal and non-verbal communication skills. The art of mastering the non-verbal language can be developed. We hope that this study will arouse interest in further studies involving communication.

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